



Region Three  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
1400 South 19<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Bozeman, MT 59718  
August 19, 2009

**Decision Notice for  
Salmon Fly Fishing Access Site  
Proposed Improvements Project  
Draft Environmental Assessment**

**Proposed Action**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposed to develop key elements of Salmon Fly Fishing Access Site (FAS) to reduce impacts to the stream and stream bank from heavy use. FWP proposed to replace two pioneered boat ramps with a single, doublewide concrete ramp, and stabilize and re-vegetate the stream bank along the remaining pioneered area. Dependent upon adequate funding, FWP also proposed to improve the existing gravel parking lot; install barriers and/or fencing to protect and stabilize the stream bank; and replace existing fire rings and picnic tables.

**Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on July 1, 2009.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken from July 1 through July 31, 2009. The EA was mailed to 25 groups and individuals.

**Summary of Public Comment**

The proposed project received 20 comments from the public. Twelve comments expressed support for the project, although eight of these comments mentioned parking capacity concerns. While not expressing project support or opposition, six additional comments focused on concerns related to potentially diminished parking capacity. Two of these comments mentioned additional suggestions detailed in the following summaries. One verbal comment opposed the project, mentioning a preference to use funding to acquire more fishing access sites, and another comment requested improving the accessibility.

### Comments Supportive of the Project: 12 Total

Twelve comments generally supported the project, with eight mentioning parking capacity concerns.

#### Examples of Comment Statements

“I think a concrete ramp will improve the access and help protect the river and stream bank. I have looked at your preliminary design and my opinion is there are not nearly enough parking spots for vehicle with trailer.”

“I agree that improvements are needed to help prevent further bank erosion in high traffic areas like those at Salmon Fly. Keep up the good work.”

**FWP Response:** FWP acknowledges the support of resource protection efforts, while recognizing concerns related to parking area development, which are addressed further in this decision notice.

### Comments related to proposed parking area improvements: 6 total

#### Example of Comment Statements

“Is it possible to change the proposed plan to include more parking for the people that use this site to float this stretch of river? I would hate to see Trucks/Trailers parked on the new grass and along the road outside of the site as this is what will happen if only 8 spots are allowed at the site.”

**FWP Response:** FWP acknowledges proposed parking area improvement concerns and plans to alter this portion of the project as detailed in the final statements of this decision notice.

### Comment opposing the project

One verbal comment opposed the project, expressing a desire to utilize funding to acquire additional sites, rather than improve Salmon Fly FAS.

**FWP Response:** FWP is also interested in increasing and improving public access but must balance these efforts with the responsibility of maintaining current fishing access sites. Funding for this project was approved by the Montana Legislature for FAS site protection projects. Proposed improvements, such as the concrete ramp and bank stabilization, mitigate impacts of current use while protecting the resource for continued public recreation.

### Comment related to accessibility

One comment addressed accessibility stating, “while I think the current proposal for Salmon Fly improvements sounds great, it sure would be cool, if possible, to also improve the accessibility and “fishability” at the FAS.”

**FWP Response:** FWP's goal is continual improvement and full access to FWP sites and programs. The main purpose of this proposed project is to develop key elements of Salmon Fly FAS to reduce impacts to the stream and stream bank from heavy use; unfortunately, funding does not allow for development of additional amenities at this time.

#### Additional suggestions mentioned in comments

One comment raised concern regarding planned fencing that will protect the riverbank, stating, "There must be an area large enough to pull boats over to the bank up stream of the ramp. If the fence is too close the person trying to land the boat will be running into the fence, and unable to get the boat out of the current and up on to the bank, as he waits his turn to land his boat."

**FWP Response:** Duly noted. FWP design and construction staff will take this into consideration when creating detailed development plans.

Another comment requested a wider cattle guard near the FAS entrance and suggested expanding the developed area, which would require removing trees, shrubs, etc.

**FWP Response:** While these suggestions have merit, funding for this project does not allow for additional improvements at this time. More than likely, funding will only allow for bank stabilization efforts, such as ramp and fencing, and minimal parking area improvements. However, FWP will consider widening the cattle guard should funding become available.

#### Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with a modified version of the improvement project described in the EA. The priority of this proposal is to protect the natural resources by mitigating impacts of heavy use. This will be accomplished by developing a doublewide concrete ramp, in addition to fencing, stabilizing and re-vegetating the stream bank. Public comments included concerns that vehicle parking capacity would be diminished, including spaces to park vehicles with trailers in particular. Given parking and funding concerns, FWP will make minor improvements to current parking areas while modifying or eliminating development of the grass island to allow continued use of this area for overflow parking during peak use. Should bid pricing and funding allow, additional improvements such as widening the cattle guard, enlarging parking areas, and installing fire rings, will be considered.

#### Appeal

This project is subject to appeal which must be submitted to the FWP Director (Mr. Joe Maurier, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701) in writing and postmarked within 30 days of the date on this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and lay out how FWP may address

the concerns in the appeal. If you have questions regarding this decision notice, please contact Todd Garrett, Fishing Access Site Manager at 406-994-6987.

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Gerald Walker  
Regional Parks Manager

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